

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 0942

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, TH
SUBJECT: CONGRESSMAN WOLFF'S PRESS CONFERENCE ON NARCOTICS
PROBLEMS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

REF: (A) STATE 011517, (B) BANGKOK 0694

1. REF (A) REPORTS THE PRESS STATEMENT GIVEN BY CONGRESSMEN
LESTER L. WOLFF AND MORGAN MURPHY FOLLOWING THEIR RETURN
TO THE UNITED STATES. WE HAVE ALSO SEEN AN AP ITEM, APPAR-
ENTLY BASED ON ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS, WHICH COVERS ADDITIONAL
POINTS. THE FOLLOWING ARE OUR PRELIMINARY COMMENTS ON
POINTS MADE IN BOTH OF THESE REPORTS.

2. CONGRESSMAN WOLFF IS QUOTED AS STATING THAT 10 TO 15
PERCENT OF THE 700 TO 1,000 TONS OF OPIUM GROWN IN THE
GOLDEN TRIANGLE WILL BE SMUGGLED INTO THE UNITED STATES.
NO SUCH STATEMENT WAS MADE TO WOLFF DURING HIS TRIP TO
THAILAND. HE WAS INFORMED THAT ESTIMATES OUT OF
WASHINGTON FOR THE AMOUNT OF ILLICIT NARCOTICS CONSUMED
IN THE US WHICH ORIGINATES IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE RANGE
FROM 5 TO 17 PERCENT OF TOTAL U.S. CONSUMPTION. AS NOTED
IN THE REFERENCE, WOLFF WHILE IN THAILAND STATED THAT HE
FELT THESE FIGURES WERE TOO LOW.

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3. THE STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO CONGRESSMAN MURPHY THAT THE BATTLE AGAINST HEROIN IN SEA IS HAMPERED BECAUSE OF INACTION BY AID WAS NOT BASED ON WHAT HE WAS TOLD BY US OR THAI BRIEFERS. TO THE CONTRARY, EMBASSY OFFICIALS EMPHASIZED THEY WERE RECEIVING PROMPT SUPPORT FROM USOM BANGKOK AND AID WASHINGTON AND THAT THERE WERE ABSOLUTELY NO COMPLAINTS ON THAT SCORE. AT THAT TIME, CONGRESSMAN WOLFF NODDED HIS HEAD IN AGREEMENT AND COMMENTED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT AID WAS FAR MORE INVOLVED IN THE EFFORT THAN TWO YEARS AGO.

4. CONCERNING ALLEGED "INACTION" BY THE GUB, WE MADE A SPECIAL EFFORT HERE TO OVERCOME THE OFT-STAED OPINION OF CONGRESSMAN WOLFF THAT THE GUB HAD NO COUNTER-NARCOTIC PROGRAM.

5. CONGRESSMAN MURPHY WAS REPORTED IN THE ACCOUNT AS STATING THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT WAS MORE INTERESTED IN FIGHTING COMMUNISM THAN COMBATTING HEROIN. THIS TYPE OF COMMENT WAS MADE TO MISSION OFFICERS BY BOTH MURPHY AND WOLFF DURING THE CODEL VISIT. WE ARE AT A LOSS TO UNDERSTAND THE REASONING OR MOTIVATION BEHIND THIS STATEMENT. IT MAY BE BASED ON THE CONGRESSMEN'S REACTION TO RTG RELUCTANCE TO ENFORCE AN OPIUM GROWING BAN AMONG THE HILLTRIBES UNTIL MORE PROGRESS IS MADE IN CROP SUBSTITUTION. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THE RTG IS JUSTIFIABLY CONCERNED OVER THE DISAFFECTION AMONG THE HILLTRIBES WHICH PREMATURE BAN ENFORCEMENT WOULD CREATE. ALSO, THE CONGRESSMEN'S COMMENT MAY BE LINKED TO EMBASSY ARGUMENTS THAT IT WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND IMPRACTICAL TO ATTEMPT TO CONTROL TRAFFICKING THROUGH SOME KIND OF US COLLABORATION WITH SHAN DISSIDENTS.

6. CONGRESSMAN MURPHY WAS QUOTED ALSO AS STATING THAT DEA PERSONNEL IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES ARE TREATED AS "SECOND-CLASS" CITIZENS BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT. DEA REGION 16 DIRECTOR ADDARIO, WHO MET THE CODEL FREQUENTLY, STATES CATEGORICALLY THAT NONE OF HIS STAFF MADE ANY COMMENTS TO THE CODEL THAT COULD HAVE LED IT TO REACH SUCH A CONCLUSION, NOR DOES HIS STAFF IN FACT FEEL THAT WAY.

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7. CONGRESSMAN MURPHY IS FURTHER QUOTED AS STATING THAT "THE THAI GOVERNMENT, AMONG OTHERS, DOUBTS THE SINCERITY OF THE US GOVERNMENT IN FIGHTING THE NARCOTICS TRADE." AS AN EXAMPLE, HE SAID THAT IN 1971 THE STATE DEPARTMENT PROMISED THAILAND SEVEN HELICOPTERS TO FIGHT NARCOTICS SMUGGLERS BUT THAT SO FAR ONLY TWO HAVE BEEN DELIVERED. IN FACT, TWO HELICOPTERS WERE REQUESTED FOR THE RTG NARCOTICS PROGRAM IN 1972 (NOT 1971). DELIVERY WAS MADE IN MARCH 1974 WHICH

WE FULLY AGREE IS AN EXCESSIVELY LONG DELAY. AGREEMENT
WAS REACHED IN 1974 TO PROVIDE A FURTHER FIVE HELICOPTERS
AFTER IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE RTG WAS GIVING US FULL
COOPERATION IN THE USE OF ITS NON-NARCOTICS-DESIGNATED
HELICOPTER ASSETS AGAINST THE TRAFFICKERS. THESE ADDITIONAL
FIVE WILL BE DELIVERED BY THE END OF 1975 ACCORDING TO
PRESENT PRODUCTION SCHEDULES. (FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE
HELICOPTER PROBLEMS IS CONTAINED IN REF (B)).

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